

I. Restriction Requirement

The November 26, 2002 Patent Office Communication asserts a restriction requirement between claims in Group I (claims 1-13 and 17-26) and Group II (claims 14-16 and 27-34). Applicant hereby elects to prosecute Group I (claims 1-13 and 17-26). New claim 35 is properly grouped with the apparatus claims of Group I, since new claim 35 is an apparatus claim that meets the Group I requirements in Item 1 of the November 26 Patent Office Communication.

Applicant notes that new claim 35 is a linking claim that links Groups I and II, i.e., new claim 35 recites "means for" performing the steps of method claim 14. Thus, upon allowance of claim 35, Applicant expects that the restriction requirement will be withdrawn and that claims 14-16 and 27-34 in Group II additionally will be considered. Please see MPEP 809.03.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,
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